

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: TRADE UNION UPDATE

REF: MADRID 7519

1. EMBOFF MET SEPARATELY ON OCT 26 WITH MANUEL GARNACHO, INDUSTRIAL FEDERATIONS SECRETARY OF THE SOCIALIST UGT, AND FERNANDO SOLANO, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST USO (PRO-MERGER WITH UGT FACTION). ASIDE FROM CLARIFICATION ON THE UGT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MONCLOA ECONOMIC PACT (SEPTOL), THE CONVERSATIONS RANGED WIDELY OVER THE SPANISH LABOR SCENE.

2. GARNACHO'S COMMENTS REHEARSED THE NOW-FAMILIAR LIST OF UGT GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE SUAREZ GOVT; THE BLOCKED GERMAN DGB LOAN, THE FAILURE TO RETURN ANY PART OF THE UNION "PATRIMONY", THE DELAY ON TRADE UNION PLANT ELECTIONS, AND ALLEGED "TILT" TOWARDS THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED SWC (MADRID 7387).

3. IN DISCUSSING THE PLANT ELECTIONS, GARNACHO WENT INTO CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ON THE ESOTERIC QUESTION OF
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"CLOSED" VS "OPEN" LISTS (SEE ALSO MADRID A-157, SENT SECSTATE ONLY). UNDER UGT-FAVORED "CLOSED" LISTS, EACH UNION CONTESTING A LOCAL PLANT ELECTION WOULD FIELD A SEPARATE LIST AND WORKERS WOULD VOTE FOR ONE COMPLETE SLATE OR ANOTHER. REPRESENTATION ON THE PLANT COMMITTEE WOULD BE IN PROPORTION TO VOTES RECEIVED: I.E., IF THE UGT TICKET TOOK 50 OF THE VOTE, THEY WOULD GAIN 50

OF THE SEATS. UNDER SO-CALLED "OPEN" LISTS (FAVORED BY SWC), ALL CANDIDATES WOULD SHARE ONE LIST. WORKERS WOULD VOTE FOR THEM AS INDIVIDUALS, AND THE FIRST PAST THE POST WOULD WIN COMMITTEE SEATS. THE UGT, USO, AND BASQUE STV FAVOR "CLOSED" LISTS, AS MORE FAVORABLE TO BUILDING UNION DISCIPLINE AND IDENTITY, AND FEAR THE SWC'S INFILTRATION TALENTS IF "OPEN" LISTS ARE ADOPTED. ALTHOUGH RUMORS LAST WEEK OF AN IMMINENT GOVT DECISION FAVORING "OPEN" LISTS (MADRID 7933) HAVE NOT YET PANNED OUT, THE UGT IS STILL APPREHENSIVE THEY WILL PROVE CORRECT.

4. GARNACHO PROVIDED SOME NEW FIGURES ON UGT MEMBERSHIP: 1.3 MILLION, VS (HE CLAIMED) 800,000 IN THE SWC. HE SHOWED EMBOFF THE TYPE OF UGT UNION CARD BEING DISTRIBUTED AND CLAIMED THAT WORKERS PAID "AT LEAST SOME UNION DUES" WHEN RECEIVING THE CARD. APPARENTLY COMPLETE FILES ARE KEPT ON THE MEMBERSHIP.

5. GARNACHO STATED THAT THE UGT WOULD PREFER, IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, TO SETTLE AS MANY ISSUES AS POSSIBLE BY NATIONAL AND/OR REGIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS COVERING ENTIRE INDUSTRIES. LOCAL ISSUES, AND IMPLEMENTATION, WOULD BE THE PROVENANCE OF THE PLANT COMMITTEES. (SOLANO STAKED OUT ESSENTIALLY THE SAME POSITION FOR THE USO).
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6. UGT AND (ESPECIALLY) USO LEADERS FREQUENTLY REFER TO THE IDEA OF "AUTOGESTION" (WORKER SELF-MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESSES) AS A DESIRABLE LONG RANGE GOAL. BOTH GARNACHO AND SOLANO CONFIRMED THAT THIS CONCEPT, WHICH HAS AROUSED CONSIDERABLE FOREIGN INTEREST, WILL TAKE A BACK SEAT FOR SOME TIME TO COME, WHILE THE UNIONS CONCENTRATE ON "CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY" AND DEFENDING MORE ESSENTIAL WORKER INTERESTS. SOLANO OFFERED THE INSIGHT THAT, WHEN THEY DO BEGIN TO DEMAND "AUTO-GESTION", HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES DO NOT THINK THE GERMAN CO-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (OF WORKER MINORITY PRESENCE ON COMPANY BOARDS) WORTH FIGHTING FOR. THEY WOULD MUCH PREFER TO GAIN CONTROL OF CERTAIN LIMITED BUT CONCRETE ASPECTS OF THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS WORK TEMPO AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY.

7. SOLANO DISCUSSED THE ISSUES BEHIND THE RECENT SPLIT IN USO (MADRID 7333) AT SOME LENGTH, OF COURSE PUTTING THE BLAME ON THE ANTI-MERGER FACTION. THE PRO-MERGER FORCES HAD HOPED TO CELEBRATE A UNITY CONGRESS AND MERGE WITH THE UGT IN EARLY NOVEMBER, BUT PREPARATIONS

ARE TAKING A LITTLE LONGER THAN EXPECTED (MADRID 7558).
THE ANTI-MERGER FACTION WILL NOT BE INVITED, AND CONSEQUENTLY APPROVAL OF THE MERGER WAS REGARDED AS CERTAIN.
HE DID NOT SPECULATE HOW MANY MEMBERS WOULD FOLLOW THE LEADERSHIP INTO THE UGT, BUT IMPLIED PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE. EATON

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